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Traditional Foods Can Be Healthy



NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH
National Cancer Institute

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Dear Reader:

We are pleased that you have received a copy of this National Cancer Institute booklet. We hope you find it helpful.

We are always trying to improve our publications. The best way we can do this is by getting your reactions. At the end of this booklet you will find a response card asking several questions. We would greatly appreciate it if you take the time to fill this out and return it to us.

All of your responses will be treated confidentially. We welcome any other comments that you may have.

Thank you in advance,

Office of Cancer Communications



Traditional Foods Can Be Healthy

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Living in Balance



Traditional foods are still a way of life
for many American Indians.

Keeping the body, mind, and spirit in balance
and celebrating the seasons
once were an essential way of life.

Today, it is still important to be
strong and healthy.



We Can Learn From Our Past

During traditional times, American Indians rarely had:

- Cancer
- Heart Disease
- Diabetes
- Obesity

We need to eat more traditional foods today!

Why was this healthy?

- Traditionally, American Indians were very active and ate smaller amounts of food than American Indian people do today.
- The foods eaten in the past by many American Indians were low in fat like fish and game (such as deer).
- The elders have told us that the amount of food eaten in a meal was as much as a person could put into the palm of the hand. That was much smaller than what we eat today!

What can you and your family do today?

- What types of traditional foods do you and your family use in your meals today?
- What types of foods could you and your family add to today's meals?
- How can you and your family reduce the amounts of food eaten?

How Foods Were Prepared

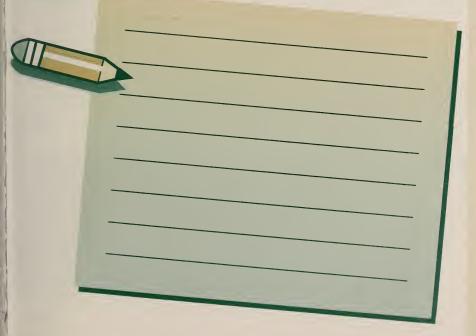
Foods were prepared in the following ways:

- Vegetables, meats and fish were smoked, dried, broiled, or boiled.
- Breads were baked.

Why was this healthy?

- Less fat was used to cook foods.
- No fat was added to foods which were boiled or dried.
- Foods did not sit in the fat.

How can you and your family prepare foods to be healthy today? Write your ideas below.



How Foods Were Selected

Foods were selected from:



Below the



Above the





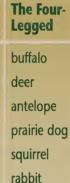
The Finned



The Winged

Ground
wild turnips
onions
potatoes
carrots

Ground
chokecherries
buffalo berries
plums
acorns
corn
wild cucumbers
asparagus
milkweed



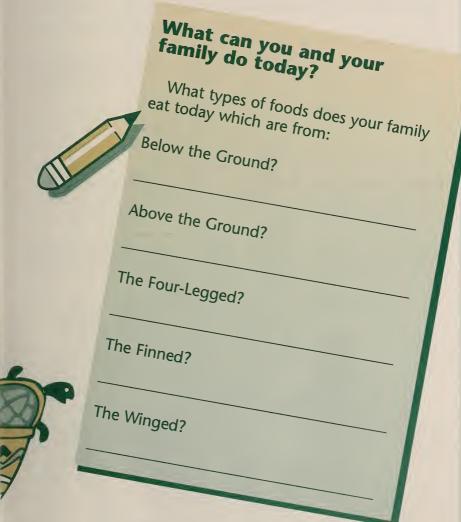






Why was this healthy?

- These foods were low in fat.
- Diets lower in fat helped lower chances of obesity, cancer, and heart disease.
- A person ate many different kinds of food.
- A variety of foods provided many nutrients for good health.



Physical Activity and Health

Physical activity was an everyday part of life. People walked, hunted, gathered, played games, danced, and/or rode horses. It was important to the community to be strong and healthy. Preparing food was also an active part of life—grounding corn meal, stripping meat, cleaning fish, for example.

Why was physical activity healthy?

- Physical activity helped burn away body fat and calories from the food.
- It helped keep people lean and healthy.
- It helped the whole body work better.
- It helped people with their spirituality.

What can you and your family do today?

What types of physical activity will you do to be healthy?



Traditional Foods in Today's World

Foods like our ancestors ate can be healthy.

What foods make up a healthy diet? Use the following information to help you choose a healthful diet that's right for you.

Examples of traditional foods that can help



Fruits

Chokecherries Currants **Buffalo** berries Cactus fruit Plums Strawberries Blackberries

Meats, dry beans, and nuts

Buffalo Squirrel Beans Deer Flk Nuts (acorns) Moose Seeds

Antelope Raccoon Rabbit

Fowl

Pheasant Grouse Prairie chicken Dove

Vegetables

Wild turnips Onions Corn Carrots Cucumber Sauash Leafy green vegetables

Fish

Salmon Bass King fish Catfish Trout Walleye Bullhead

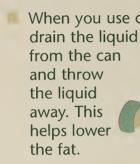
Grains and bread

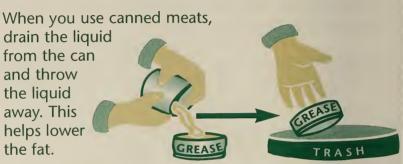
Wild rice Barley Wheat

Tips to create a healthy diet

Today we get most of our foods from the store or as commodities. Here are some tips to help you create a healthy diet.

Before you go to the store, make a shopping list for your family's good health. Choose foods from the Food Guide Pyramid and include traditional foods where possible.





My Shopping List

Vegetables

Fruits

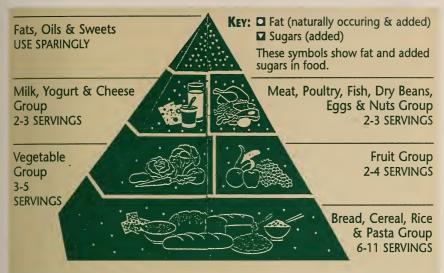
Grains and Bread, Cereal, Rice, and Pasta

Lean Meats, Fish and/or Fowl, Dry Beans,

Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese

Other Foods

Some publications of interest include:



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services

What counts as a serving? Food Groups:

BREAD, CEREAL, RICE, and PASTA

1 slice of bread

1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal

1/2 cup of cooked cereal, rice, or pasta

VEGETABLES

1 cup of raw, leafy vegetables

1/2 cup of other vegetables, cooked or chopped raw

3/4 cup of vegetable juice

FRUITS

1 medium apple, banana, or orange 1/2 cup of chopped, cooked, or canned fruit

3/4 cup of fruit juice

MILK, YOGURT, and CHEESE

1 cup of milk or yogurt

11/2 ounces of natural cheese

2 ounces of process cheese

MEAT, POULTRY, FISH, DRY BEANS, EGGS and NUTS

2-3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish

1/2 cup of cooked dry beans, 1 egg, or 2 tablespoons of peanut butter—count as 1 ounce of lean meat

For Additional Information

National Cancer Institute

Action Guide for Healthy Eating

WRITE: Nutrition Books
National Cancer Institute
Office of Cancer Communications
Building 31, Room 10A03
31 Center Drive MSC 2580
Bethesda, MD 20892-2580

OR CALL: 1-800-4-CANCER

U.S. Department of Agriculture

To receive one free copy of the following brochures:

- Nutrition & Your Health Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Dietary Guidelines and Your Diet
- Preparing Foods and Planning Menus Using the Dietary Guidelines
- Making Bag Lunches, Snacks, and Desserts Using the Dietary Guidelines
- Shopping for Food and Making Meals in Minutes Using the Dietary Guidelines
- Eating Better When Eating Out Using the Dietary Guidelines

WRITE: 1120 20th Street, NW North Lobby, Suite 200 Washington, DC 20036

OR CALL: 202-418-2312

Attention: All Readers

Please tell us what you think of this booklet.
1. The booklet was: ☐ easy to understand ☐ hard to understand
2. The information was ☐ too much ☐ too little ☐ just the right
amount
3. I would: ☐ recommend the booklet to other American Indians ☐ NOT recommend the booklet to other American Indians
4. I got this booklet from a:
☐ Doctor's office, hospital, or health clinic
☐ Pow wow
☐ Small group or community gathering
☐ WIC or other nutrition program
☐ Calling 1-800-4-CANCER (Cancer Information Service)
☐ Convention or conference
☐ School (what kind?)
☐ Church program
☐ Other (please explain)
5. Did this booklet
a. cover information that you needed ☐ yes ☐ no
b. make you aware of how nutritious American Indian foods can be? \Box yes \Box no
c. help you understand how to change your eating habits?
d. help you make decisions about how to change your cooking?
☐ yes ☐ no e. help you select foods when shopping? ☐ yes ☐ no
6. What is your age?
7. How far did you go in school? ☐ 8th grade or less ☐ some college
☐ some high school ☐ college graduate
☐ high school graduate ☐ graduate level education
8. Are you a health professional? yes no
9. Do you think production of this booklet should be:
□ continued? □ discontinued?
10. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions that would help
us improve this publication?

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Office of Cancer Communications
Building 31, Room 10A03
31 Center Drive, MSC 2580
Bethesda, MD 20892-2580

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Charon Asetoye

Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center Lake Andes, South Dakota

Peggy Sarracino Barnett

La Posta Substance Abuse Center Southern Indian Health Council, Inc. Boulevard, California

Ronnie Bell

Bowman Gray School of Medicine Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Trula Breuninger

First Nations Community Health Force Albuquerque, New Mexico

L. Burhansstipanov

Native American Cancer Research Program AMC Cancer Research Center Denver, Colorado

Judith Raker

Formerly, American Indian Health Care Association St. Paul, Minnesota

Jackie Rouse

Formerly, Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center Lake Andes, South Dakota

Sheri Scott

National AIDS Hotline Durham, North Carolina

Shevonee Shuman

Formerly, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Hagansburg, New York

Roanna Stump

Community Health Representative Program Fort Hall, Idaho

Pamela Jumper Thurman

Department of Psychology Colorado State University Fort Collins, Colorado





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